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THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 6 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, MARCH, 1924 NUMBER 3

MARCH MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 13th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner McAllister and Larkin Sts. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

The feature of the evening will consist of an address by Dr. Tracy I. Storer, Honorary President of the Association, on "The Body Covering of Birds." Members will wish to greet Dr. Storer on the occasion of his first attendance since his transfer to the Zoology Division at the University of California Farm at Davis. Visitors will be made welcome.

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MARCH FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, March 16th, to Landsdale; thence skirting Fairfax and over the old Bolinas grade, to the head of Alpine Lake, where lunch will be eaten. Return via Lake Lagunitas to Ross. Total distance about eleven miles. Bring canteens. This route traverses a beautiful district which always furnishes a fine list at this season of the year.

Purchase round trip tickets to Landsdale, 60c, and take Sausalito boat leaving Ferry Building at 8:45 a. m. Leader, Miss Hilda Baily.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING: The eighty-fifth regular meeting of the Association was held on February 14th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. Carl R. Smith, Secretary; fifteen members and sixteen guests in attendance.

Following the disposition of routine business, Mr. Joseph Mailliard gave an interesting account of some six weeks' "Wanderings in Northeastern California," during the Spring time, when the snow was still to be found at the higher altitudes reached, and through a district underlain throughout by lava formations. The weather, the mammals, the birds and the terrain seemed united in a conspiracy to circumvent the efforts of the expedition to make a faunal survey. The first was consistently bad; the second and third notable for their scarcity and the fourth, rough.

A generous assortment of lantern slides depicted the country traversed, and furnished the background for the speaker's descriptions, all of which were thoroughly enjoyed by those present.

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Following the meeting, the Board of Directors elected to membership Messrs. Joseph Mailliard and Henry Trost; and, on March 1st, Miss Muriel S. Pettit, all of San Francisco.

THE EFFECT OF AUTOMOBILES ON SMALL BIRD LIFE

The list of small birds killed on our highways by rapidly moving motors runs into large numbers and the only consolation I have found is furnished by the sixty three dead cats I have counted along the road between July 1 and December 5, outside the cities. It is claimed by some that the automobile will exterminate the human race and I anticipate with pleasure that the same agency will likewise greatly reduce the worst enemy of birds, except man.

The fast machines which traverse our highways at speeds of fifty to sixty miles per hour, leave in their wake and in the grassy borders of the road a multitude of dead and crippled birds, one of the chief sufferers being the useful, sweet-singing meadowlark. For miles and miles our highways run alongside railroad tracks, and the lark finds the cleared right-of-ways feeding grounds to his liking, and spends much time foraging therein. When frightened by passing trains, he naturally flies downhill and straight across the highway. Slow flier that he is, it is difficult for him to avoid a passing machine and so he is very liable to be hit. I have had one fly into the side of my machine when running only thirty five miles per hour.

The shrike is also a clumsy and slow flier, but I have found only two of them dead on the highway, although one once came into my machine through the open wind-shield and passed out the back through a broken light, unharmed, I believe.

The English sparrow, a poor flier, seems to be immune from all things, and to judge from their numbers, they have all had gland operations. I have found numerous hawks and owls on the highways, but I think that they have been shot by boys and left there.

Linnets, I should say, rank next in fatalities to the meadowlark. The horned larks, which are always in the road, and persist in remaining there until hidden from sight by the mud guards, manage to escape damage. On one occasion, however, when two inches of snow fell between Porterville and Bakersfield, they would congregate as usual in the middle of the road, flying to the side at the approach of a machine, and attempting to alight on the snow which covered the surface of the water. Many were thus drowned. I rescued one and took it to my room in the hotel, placing it beside the radiator to dry and thaw. The following morning it ate heartily of bread crumbs and along toward noon, when the sun was out, I raised the window and placed it upon the sill. It spread its wings twice, as if testing them, and then flew away.

CARL R. SMITH.

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THE RING-NECKED DUCK

In March, 1922, I was informed that there was a flock of these birds on the Chain Lakes in Golden Gate Park, and as I thought I had never before met them, I went to investigate. Approaching the lake from the west side so as to be down-wind, I heard the call note of a duck which took me back many years to the shallow, rice-covered sloughs of the northern part of the Territory of Dakota. The call is unlike that of any other duck, being a low, prolonged, whistle. Soon I observed what I had always known as the black duck. There were eight males and thirteen females. Their blackish bills are crossed by a narrow, bluish white band near the end. His glossy purplish black head with a narrow, tight-fitting chestnut collar makes the male a bird of striking appearance.

On the nesting grounds they feed on snails which give the flesh an unpleasant taint and so they are seldom shot for food. The information I have at hand gives only two nesting records for this state. On the nesting grounds, although they will nest on the same slough, they always keep by themselves and do not mingle with the other water fowl.

Carl R. Smith.

Ed. Note: In "A Distributional List of the Birds of California," 1915, Dr. Grinnell characterized this bird, *Marila collaris*, as a rather uncommon winter visitant, although formerly fairly common. In view of this, it will be of interest to review the observations made by members of the Association during the two years just past.

On March 5, 1922, Mr. C. R. Thomas discovered a small flock of these interesting ducks on the North Chain Lake in Golden Gate Park. Other members saw them that day and the next. This was the first identification since the Association was organized in 1917. The following will give critical dates sufficient to indicate the range:

Mar. 5, 1922	Golden Gate Park, San Francisco	A. few
Dec. 17, "	" " " " "	12 m. 24 f.
Oct. 7, 1923	Summit Reservoir, Berkeley	5 m. 3 f.
Nov. 11, "	Phoenix and Lagunitas Lakes	Fair-sized flock.
Dec. 16, "	Golden Gate Park, San Francisco	Over twenty.
Mar. 7, 1924	" " " " "	One female.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Baltimore Oriole and a Biographical Sketch of Audubon. By Raphael Semmes Payne. Baltimore. The Norman, Redington Co. $1.00. A highly sympathetic appreciation of the bird, (28pp.), with a copy of Audubon's picture of the male in flight and a half-tone picture of a typical nest, followed by a brief sketch of the artist's life, (18pp.).

American Game Bird Pictures. Eighteen plates, 13" x 14½", in four colors, after original paintings by Lynn Bogue Hunt, depicting about thirty different species. Descriptive text of each bird on the reverse side by Edward Howe Forbush, State Ornithologist of Massachusetts.

E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, is prepared to fill a limited number of orders at the price of $2.00 per set. The illustrated circular indicates an excellent job of reproduction in the full-size plates and over twenty of the species occur hereabouts. Remittance should be made by check or money order only.

Birds of California. By William Leon Dawson. Los Angeles. The South Moulton Co. has completed at least one copy of this work, which was recently brought to San Francisco for presentation to a patron. As yet, no date has been set for the delivery of copies to subscribers for the ordinary editions.

NATURE LORE FOR VACATION DAYS

Dr. H. C. Bryant is about to inaugurate his annual course of fifteen lessons covering the field of outdoor life and nature study for the benefit of those who wish to enjoy all the delights open to the camper or visitor who traverses our mountain country in summer. Address any University Extension office for details.

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FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 17th, by motor stage to Burlingame; thence out Easton Road to the top of the Buriburi ridge, where lunch was eaten with the usual flock of pipits and horned larks as a treat; thence, up the valley to San Andreas lake, at the upper end of which were found large flocks of Canada geese, ducks and coots; thence along the line of the old road, now intersected and replaced by the new Sky-line Boulevard, down the canyon road to the highway at Uncle Tom's Cabin.

The band-tailed pigeons were missing this time, and we sought the black-crowned night heron and Say phoebe in vain, but the day was delightful and the list of birds large and interesting.

A fraction of the party left early and took the road down to Millbrae. When the later contingent reached the highway, some took the stage and the others returned to the city on the trolley.

Water birds encountered on the bay and at San Andreas were: Western grebe, glaucous-winged, western, California and Bonaparte gulls; cormorant, mallard, pintail, canvas-back and scaup; white-winged and surf scoters, Canada geese, great blue heron, coot and spotted sandpiper. Land birds: California quail, sharp-shinned, Cooper, red-tail and sparrow hawks; an invisible woodpecker who pounded over our heads for ten minutes; flicker, Anna and Allen hummers, black phoebe and horned larks; California jay, bi-colored redwing, meadowlark and Brewer blackbird; purple finch, linnet, green-backed goldfinch and pine siskin; Nuttall and golden-crowned sparrows, junco and song sparrow; San Francisco and California towhees, shrike and Hutton vireo; Audubon and Townsend warblers, pipit, California thrasher and Vigors wren; creeper, titmouse, chickadee, bush and wren-tits; ruby-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush and western bluebird. Fifty-six species.

Members in attendance were: Mesdemoiselles Baily, Beaman, Olive Burroughs, Cohen and Nienburg; Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe, Mexia and Witt; Messrs. Bourne, Kibbe, Rapp, Thomas, Ananda and Eric Jacobs. As guests, Mesdemoiselles Meacham, Pettit, Wyss and Zeile; Mrs. A. Goss; Messrs. Curtis and Grueningen and Felix Jacobs. Fifteen members and eight guests.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

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